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**COLORADO
WORKS**
Earning, Learning, Thriving



**Colorado Department
of Human Services**
people who help people

DIRECT FROM THE DIRECTOR...

It's September! In America it's the month we celebrate Labor Day and traditionally think of as "back to school" time and the beginning of football season. The weather is changing, but the volume of work doesn't appear to follow suit.

In 1887, Colorado was one of the first states to make Labor Day a holiday as a way to pay tribute to the contributions and efforts of the American worker. The character of the Labor Day celebration has undergone change over the years, moving away from parades and political speeches to a day of rest, barbecues, and a last opportunity for outdoor activities and family vacations. It is also the symbolic end of summer and for some of us that have been around awhile, the last day of the year to wear white shoes.

Labor Day recognition is two-fold for me, as I am moved to acknowledge and appreciate all of the efforts of Colorado Works staff and partners statewide. Your strides in application processing and customer engagement are so worthy of recognition. On the other hand, the nature of our work is about helping others to enter the workforce by engaging them in meaningful work activities. It is appropriate, therefore, that Colorado Works put a special emphasis on employment this month. Efforts are underway to upgrade the Workforce Development track in CBMS with an eye towards usability and outcome tracking. Counties are encouraged to invite their contractors to join us at the Administrator's meeting on September 25th as we explore employment strategies, career pathways, assessment and other workforce efforts.



COLORADO WORKS IN ACTION!

This month's success story is from Cathi Smith of Adams County.

Partnering with CWEE

Like many participants referred to [CWEE's workforce program](#), Tammy faced multiple challenges when she showed up to orientation in January: Tammy didn't have a high school diploma, she had previous substance abuse issues, and her son was in the process of being diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. However, Tammy dove head first into the CWEE program, eagerly taking advantage of all it offered. She jumped at the opportunity to lead assembly in the morning, had stellar attendance, and was a consistent positive example of professionalism without losing her unique style and personality. Above all, she remained optimistic despite her daily obstacles.

Overcoming Challenges!

Tammy worked incredibly hard on GED preparation knowing that passing those tests was going to be a struggle for her. After a few weeks, Tammy and CWEE staff determined it would not be possible for Tammy to earn her GED in the time she had to train at CWEE. Pushing forward, Tammy applied for and was accepted to an internship with CWEE community employer partner, The Argyle, a senior residence community. Although she had not completed her GED, Tammy made the courageous decision to work six weeks unpaid to gain new skills, network, and continue to move toward her job goal. Tammy impressed The Argyle staff so much that they encouraged her to apply for a paid position. After interning for only a month, Tammy was offered the position of Dietary Aide and began full time employment in August, six months after attending CWEE orientation.

Tammy continues to work on her GED when she is not at The Argyle. Her CWEE case manager has helped connect her son to doctors and community resources. Also, Tammy will soon have a brand new set of pearly whites as a result of dental work provided through a Metro Denver Dental Society program.

In her work with CWEE, she developed the ability to deal with life's obstacles with grace and a sense of humor. Although there will continue to be new challenges for Tammy, her contagious optimism, shining personality, and newfound confidence have a positive effect on all those around her and will help sustain her successes.



Colorado Works would like to share your success story! Please submit your story to Michelle Sykes at Michelle.Sykes@state.co.us before October 1st.

SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERISM IN EL PASO COUNTY

The following video and thoughts were provided by Becky Jacobs of El Paso County DHS.



[2nd Annual Back to School Extravaganza](#)

The Back to School Extravaganza is hosted by Mercy Springs based on referrals from El Paso County DHS. In addition to providing the referrals, El Paso County DHS staff volunteered at the event. The following are Becky's thoughts after her volunteer experience.

"We get the unique opportunity to tell our story, our vision for helping families move out of poverty, the numbers, the challenges that families face every day and we get to put a real face on poverty in our community. This year we gave away 2,576 back packs filled with school supplies. DHS does not contribute any financial support; we take care of the referrals and provide volunteers for the event. I can tell you that we had a great time and the families were so blown away; it was a day to relax, have fun, enjoy the activities with their children and celebrate the start of new school year!"



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IN TIME, ON TIME

Amazing job, counties! We not only met, but exceeded the 12-month 95% timeliness goal for new applications by 3%, beginning September at 98% timely! Kudos to the county workers, for all that YOU have done to meet this goal. But we aren't finished just yet. We continue focusing on processing redeterminations. At 87%, we have to increase our processing by 8% in order to meet 95% timely in January 2013.

In working with counties thus far, we have been able to identify some key themes that have helped to drastically improve overall processing. They are: 1) identifying backlog, 2) knowing the work, and 3) ensuring all staff has the system and program knowledge needed to carry out their responsibilities.



What does identifying the backlog mean? A backlog is anything that isn't finished within the month. If your county does not have a Work Management System (WMS) or other automated tool that tracks backlog, identify your county's backlog by conducting an audit of cases at workers' desks. Count cases from the last month, and note those that will become backlog at the end of the current month. Then, GET RID OF IT! Next, identify what causes backlog and develop a plan to figure out how to stop it from ever happening again. Knowing what work has to be done today and in the future at all times is key. Use the state's weekly reports if your county does not have its own monitoring system. Finally, train staff on minimum verification requirements and cross train staff to be reallocated based on where the workload is. Eliminate antiquated business processes and forms, utilize the "In the Weeds" newsletters and upcoming trainings to acclimate staff to rule changes, and take advantage of materials provided at the Administrators Meetings. If you are a county worker and you don't get the documents, ask for them! And most importantly, observe your work flow and that of your staff for efficiencies. We are at a place where every action counts! Colorado Works is very serious about supporting every effort that will help counties to provide customers with a timely eligibility determination.

We are working hard to continue to provide counties with the best support we can provide. Along those lines, we are pleased to announce Jason Everts has joined our team as the new Colorado Works Program Integrity Lead! Please read more about Jason in our Spotlight on Colorado Works Staff below.

If you have any questions, suggestions, would like more information, or need assistance, please contact Jason Everts at Jason.Everts@state.co.us or Paula Lujan at Paula.Lujan@state.co.us.

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POVERTY IN COLORADO: NEW DATA FROM THE CENSUS BUREAU

Data released September 12th by the Census Bureau indicates that the poverty rate in Colorado increased from an average of 9.8 percent in 2006-2007 to 12.7 percent in 2010-2011. Moreover, median household income adjusted for inflation decreased from \$64,226 to \$60,381 during the same time period. Preliminary data also indicate that the percentage of Coloradans without health insurance remained relatively unchanged from last year at 17 percent. For more information surrounding these data, please visit the Colorado Center on Law and Policy website at: <http://www.cclponline.org/>.

The new data also included national figures. The official 2011 poverty rate was 15.0 percent,

representing 46.2 million people in poverty. After 3 consecutive years of increases, neither the official poverty rate nor the number of people in poverty was statistically different from the 2010 estimates. The Census Bureau's website has more information and data: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/index.html>.

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DRILLING DOWN!

On Employment

This section of the newsletter addresses specific Colorado Works rules questions, mostly using actual questions received by the Coworks.Issues e-mail.

Question 1:

What work activities are subject to provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)?

Answer 1:

There are 3 countable activities that are subject to provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. They are Community Work Experience Program (CWEP), Alternative Work Experience (AWEP), and Community Service (CS). All work experience participants are considered employees under the FLSA.

CBMS calculates these payments automatically in order to compensate the participant for hours worked that are not fully compensated by the benefit amount.

Question 2:

A client is receiving TANF benefits for her two-month old granddaughter and her own seventeen year old child, the mother of granddaughter. Would she just be required to participate in work activities 22 hours per week?

Answer 2:

Single parents age 20 years and over with at least one child under age (6) six years must have 88 actual hours per month in employment related work activities to meet the Federal Work Participation requirement. This would apply to your client, or grandma, because she is receiving TANF for her own child and her grandchild.

It is good practice to think beyond meeting work participation when developing an IRC. Consider what will best assist the family's self-sufficiency goals.

Question 3:

Is Workers' Compensation coverage required for Community Service (CS), Alternative Work Experience (AWEP), and Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) participation?

Answer 3:

Yes – for more on this, read the state's [Work Verification Plan](#). A good rule is to always have either the work site or county cover the Workers' Compensation. It may also be good to consult your county attorney on how your county would like to handle these situations.

Question 4:

I am Colorado Works benefit specialist. I receive TANF clients that are applying for SSI and have a disability. My clients do not work and have maybe one doctor appointment a month and one hour contact with social security a month. I understand non-compliance and imposing sanctions, however, do disabled clients fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rules?

Are we discriminating by making disabled clients turn in an activity sheet if there is no work activity, then turn around and start a non-compliance sanction if there is no activity sheet turned in?

Answer 4:

Disabled individuals do fall under ADA and Colorado Works should make reasonable accommodations for those individuals. Clear instructions from a physician about a participant's limitations should inform the appropriate level of participation outlined in an IRC.

Before moving forward with a non-compliance action for someone who has not turned in an activity sheet, you should be clear about these limitations and consider whether the IRC requirements are appropriate and achievable. If a participant is able to do work or other activities and he or she has not demonstrated good cause for not participating, only then consider non-compliance action.

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PREVENTING UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES

What's happening in adolescent sexual health?

While most youth have returned to the hustle and bustle of back-to-school activities, there are many homeless and runaway youth who have not. These displaced youth are usually victims of abuse and have chosen to leave their unsafe home or have been kicked out for a variety of reasons. Many homeless and runaway youth identify as LGBTQ and do not have support or acceptance at home. Sadly, runaway, homeless, and street youth have been or, are at risk of being, subjected to sexual abuse, prostitution, or sexual exploitation while on the streets. Additionally, they are at a higher risk of dealing with substance use disorders, mental health challenges, sexually transmitted infections, and yes, unintended teen pregnancy. It is important to recognize that these disconnected youth do not have access to many of the services available to other youth enrolled in school. Both federal and state governments are working together to identify ways to increase access to services for homeless and runaway youth as well as opportunities to successfully get them into stable, supportive, homes. Please take a moment to learn more and think about ways you and your community can reach these youth.

Recommended Reading

Provided by the [National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth](#)

Focusing on Outcomes for Youth: Safety

The Family and Youth Services Bureau believes the most crucial outcomes for runaway and homeless youth include well-being, permanent connections, safety and self-sufficiency. In this issue of The Exchange, we focus on ways to achieve and improve safety for runaway and homeless youth. [Read more...](#)

NCFY Recommends: How Well Are You Serving LGBTQ Youth?

How welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth are your facilities, handouts, reading materials and speech? A new checklist from the National Center for Cultural Competence, at Georgetown University, can help you measure how LGBTQ-friendly your organization or program's staff and services are. [Read more...](#)



National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth
A Resource of the Family and Youth Services Bureau
ADVANCING YOUTH WORK FOR 20 YEARS

Adolescent Health Resources

Provided by [Ready by 21](#)

How to Communicate about the Dropout Crisis

How can you get more people involved in helping to increase high school graduation rates? Good communication is essential, and this [recorded webinar from America's Promise Alliance](#) highlights new research about how to inspire more participation from key audiences.



Creating Authentic School/Community Partnerships

People working with schools in low-income urban areas know that improving educational outcomes requires strengthening community partnerships. But how? This 14-page [discussion paper from Chapin Hall](#) examines the authentic engagement of communities in school and community partnerships. It presents three key ideas for considering authentic engagement: place-based policy, community-based versus institution-based partnerships, and community capacity.

ChapinHall at the University of Chicago
Policy research that benefits children, families, and their communities

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SEPTEMBER IS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MONTH



[Workforce Development Month PSA from Governor Hickenlooper](#)

Discover hiring events in your area by visiting the [Colorado Department of Labor and Employment website](#).

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LIFELINE AWARENESS WEEK

It is not only Adult Education and Family Literacy Week, it's LifeLine Awareness Week! Low-income families may be eligible for telephone service benefits. Do you know families that cannot

afford a telephone line? Lifeline is a government benefit program supported by the Universal Service Fund that provides a discount on phone service for qualifying low-income consumers.

During Lifeline Awareness Week 2012 (September 10 - 14, 2012), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) would like to ensure that you and your constituents are informed about recent reforms to the Lifeline Program. There are a few important messages about the program that we would like to highlight:

- Lifeline is available only to eligible consumers. To see if a consumer is eligible, visit www.lifelinesupport.org
- Eligible consumers may receive only ONE discount per household and they must decide whether that discount is applied to their wireline or wireless service. Federal rules prohibit consumers from receiving more than one Lifeline service.
- If a consumer or his or her household currently has more than one Lifeline discounted service, they must select a single provider immediately or be subject to penalties.
- In order to enroll in Lifeline, potential subscribers must demonstrate their eligibility by showing proof of income or participation in a qualifying program.
- All Lifeline subscribers must annually recertify their eligibility. In late 2012, all 17 million Lifeline subscribers will be contacted by their service provider to re-confirm that they remain eligible in the program.

Information about the Lifeline Program is available at <http://www.fcc.gov/lifeline/outreach>. For information about eligibility, how to apply for Lifeline benefits, or what to do if a household is receiving more than one Lifeline discount, visit the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) website at www.lifelinesupport.org. You may also call the FCC at 1-888-225-5322.



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SPOTLIGHT ON COLORADO WORKS STAFF

Jason Everts

Greetings to everyone, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jason Everts and I am the new Colorado Works Program Integrity Lead. It is an honor and my privilege to be joining the Program Integrity unit. This is an exciting new opportunity and I look forward to working with each and every one of you.

I have been in the business of finding people jobs across a wide range of areas over the past 15 years. My background is human resources in both the private and public sector. I was drawn to an opening with the City and County of Denver's Office of Economic Development (OED) in their Training and Assessment team a few years ago. With so many years hiring and recruiting people across a wide range of job fields, it allowed me to help people navigate the sometimes murky side of landing an interview and



eventually a job offer.

While with Denver I helped provide training classes to customers who ranged from Colorado Works recipients to unemployed citizens looking to improve their career search. We worked to provide the long-term tools for anyone to locate and find employment. This included mock interviews, resume and computer classes. Connecting those folks with recruiters and helping numerous people find employment was the most rewarding experience in my career at the time.

Next I worked on a team that provided in-depth assessment and career planning for Colorado Works customers. We used several tools and methods designed to help us understand how best to guide Denver's TANF clients into personalized career paths. The program helped identify barriers not always evident from personal interviews. Then I transitioned into being a case manager at OED utilizing our contracted service providers and other internal programs to work with my customers. Denver underwent budget shifts and I transitioned into an eligibility case worker in Denver's Human Services agency for food stamps and family Medicaid. This has provided me with a well-rounded understanding of working with our customers from application to finding a career, not just a job.

I am a father of two wonderful children and have been married to my lovely wife for 14 years now. We all enjoy travelling and visiting places across Colorado and the country. And finally, I am the 11th generation of my family to live in the great State of Colorado raising the 12th.

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TRIVIA

What is the official state fossil of Colorado?

[Answer](#)

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TANF RELATED NEWS AND REPORTS

TANF at 15 Reading Series

[Part I: TANF at 15: How Well Does It Provide Income Support for Poor Families?](#)

[Part II: TANF at 15: How Have States Spent Their TANF Dollars?](#)

[Part III: TANF at 15: What Is TANF's Record of Success?](#)

[Part IV: TANF at 15: Looking Ahead](#)



Check out this report on the Labor Market from the Urban Institute!

Labor Market and Demographic Analysis: A National Picture of Short-term Employment Growth by Skill

by Pamela Loprest & Josh Mitchell

The report examines the continuing pace of economic recovery by industry sector, occupational categories and skill levels and covers the following:

Over the next five years, although job growth will be modest to slow across the board, it is projected to be slightly higher for jobs that require both the lowest and highest levels of education. The largest net gains in employment for jobs that require less than a high school education will be in the leisure and hospitality sector. The second largest growth will be in the professional and business services sector, with additional jobs appearing in construction as that sector continues to recover.

For jobs requiring just a high school education, employment growth is spread across several industries. Professional and business services, leisure and hospitality, and health services have the largest net gains. Wholesale and retail trade, as well as the recovering construction and government sectors, will also show gains.

Projections for future employment growth over the next five years show improvements in all sectors, but even with continued growth, construction, manufacturing, wholesale, and retail trade are not projected to regain prior 2007 employment levels by 2017. Jobs requiring high school or less than high school education are not projected to return to their 2007 level until 2014.



Region VIII Webinar Series, Part 2: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Compliance Training

The Region VIII Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Compliance Training Webinar will bring together TANF stakeholders for a training from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) focusing on how HIPAA requirements impact State and Tribal TANF programs.

Webinar participants will have the opportunity to obtain information and technical assistance on issues related to HIPAA requirements that are critical to the ongoing success of TANF programs, including contracted agencies, work partners and Native Employment Works (NEW) grantees.

Webinar date: September 18, 2012

Webinar start time: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. MDT

This webinar is open to all Region VIII State Directors, local TANF agencies, and workforce development partners.

[Register for the webinar here.](#)

Should you have any questions about registration, please contact Colleen Wolfe at colleen.wolfe@icfi.com. If you have any questions about the webinar content, please contact Vicky Herring at vicky.herring@acf.hhs.gov.

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COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS MEETING

The Colorado Works County Administrators meeting will be held on **September 25, 2012** from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

[Register Now](#)

Please indicate your lunch preference when you register.

Location

A/D Works
6954 S. Lima Street
Lima Arapahoe Board Room
Centennial, CO 80112

Meeting Room

<http://cohuman.adobeconnect.com/countyadmin/>

Teleconference Number: 1.866.244.8528

Participant Code: 107020#

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TRAINING AND EVENTS SCHEDULE

Rule Rewrite Training

September 18, 2012

SSTABS Pre-session
Ramada Plaza Hotel and Conference Center

October 3, 2012

Douglas County

October 10, 2012

Durango

October 11, 2012

Montrose

October 24, 2012

Prowers County

October 31, 2012

Metro Area - TBD

[Additional Information and Registration](#)

Colorado Works Basics

November 6 - 7, 2012

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
CDHS State Office
Garden Level Conference Room
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

[Additional Information and Registration](#)

Save the Date

2012 SSTABS Conference

September 19 - 21, 2012

Ramada Plaza Hotel and Conference Center

[Additional Information and Registration](#)



Kinship Care in Colorado

Montezuma County

Tuesday, October 2, 2012, 9:00-11:00 am

Montezuma County Social Services

109 W. Main, Rm. 203

Cortez, CO 81321

La Plata County

Tuesday, October 2, 2012, 1:00-4:00 pm

La Plata County Human Services

1020 E. Second Ave.

Durango, CO 81301

March 7-8, 2013

Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center

[Additional Information](#)

Training Cancellations

Knowledge Transfer (KT) Call

September 19, 2012



[Additional Information](#)

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TRIVIA ANSWER



The Stegosaurus is our official state fossil. Many of the first dinosaur fossils were found in western Colorado and the first Stegosaurus ever found was collected near Morrison, just west of Denver. The giant Supersaurus probably weighed about 92,400 pounds.

Find more Fun Dino Facts at <https://www.museumofwesternco.com/dino-digs/about-dinosaurs/>.

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